

VZCZCXRO0667
PP RUEHBZ RUEH DU RUEHJO RUEHMR RUEHRN
DE RUEHLS #1303/01 3340848
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 300848Z NOV 07
FM AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5192
INFO RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AF DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHLMC/MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORP PRIORITY 0053

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 LUSAKA 001303

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E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [ZA](#)
SUBJECT: ZAMBIA - POLITICAL ROUNDUP

REF: LUSAKA 1253

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1. Summary:

- Investigation into Sata Passport Issuance
- Patriotic Front Wins November 9 Parliamentary By-election
- Update on National Constitutional Conference
- Newcomer Makes Waves in MMD

Investigation into Sata Passport Issuance

1.2. The intense media coverage of Opposition Patriotic Front president Michael Sata's allegedly lost passport (reftel) continued in early November. The independent Post newspaper even went so far as to publish pictures from a closed circuit television camera at the Crowne Plaza Hotel supposedly showing Sata tucking his passport into his jacket pocket as he checked out. Minister of Home Affairs Ronnie Shikapwasha announced at a November 9 press conference that the GRZ was launching an investigation into how Sata obtained a new passport without providing a police report as required by Zambian law. Shikapwasha said that his Ministry had asked Sata to provide a copy of the police report he said he had furnished to the Zambian High Commission in London in order to obtain a travel document that permitted him to return to Zambia to solicit a new passport, which was also issued without the submission of a police report. When Sata failed to provide a copy of a police report, the Chief Passport Office suspended the new passport and Sata turned it in to the authorities on November 8. Shikapwasha said that the police had recorded warn-and-caution statements against Sata and the five passport officers who issued him his travel document in London and the subsequent new passport in Zambia.

These warn-and-caution statements indicate that an investigation is ongoing and that an arrest could be made at the conclusion of the investigation. Sata has had no comment about the investigation or the subsequent suspension of his passport, and media coverage of the issue has died down.

PF Wins November 9 Parliamentary By-election

1.3. Patriotic Front candidate Wilbur Simuusa was the winner in the Nchanga district parliamentary by-election held on November 9. MMD candidate Charles Chimumbwa, whose defection from the PF made the by-election necessary, came in a distant second in the race, losing to Simuusa by over 6,000 votes. Nchanga district is located in the Copperbelt Province, which is a traditional PF stronghold, but the MMD mobilized its considerable resources in wooing Nchanga voters. Visits by the President and Vice President, fertilizer, food and chitenge (traditional cotton wraps) cloth distributions were

all elements of the MMD's campaign. However, at the last minute Chimumbwa was called into court to face fraud charges in a business deal gone bad, and this may have combined with rumors that Chimumbwa accepted financial incentives from the MMD in switching parties to make voters hold on to the PF. The MMD did sweep seven out of the ten municipal ward by-elections also held on November 9.

Update on National Constitutional Conference

14. On November 22, Parliament voted 63-61 to reject the annual report of the Committee on Legal Affairs, Governance, Human Rights and Gender matters because it contained recommendations for amendments to the National Constitutional Conference Act. The Legal Affairs Committee has a majority of opposition members and apparently used its annual report as an attempt to bring attention to calls for changes to the NCC Act. Justice Minister George Kunda rejected the tactic, saying that the government was very advanced in its preparations for the NCC, which was originally supposed to begin sitting next week. No official opening date has been announced yet, and Kunda said that the NCC would open "sometime next month." In the meantime, Heritage Party president Brigadier Godfrey Miyanda has filed a court case challenging the NCC on the grounds that the NCC Act discriminates against smaller parties by only allowing political parties who are members of the Zambia Center for Interparty Dialogue to nominate representatives to the NCC. The case is scheduled to be heard by the Lusaka High Court on December 26.

Newcomer Makes Waves in MMD

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15. An automotive and aerospace engineering professor who has been resident in the UK for the past 18 years is making waves within the ruling Movement for Multiparty Democracy by announcing his intention to run for president of the party. Professor Clive Chirwa, who only joined the MMD this past September and who appears to have been unknown to Zambians before a few interviews in local papers during his visit to Zambia at that time, announced his intentions on November 22. Professor Chirwa is chair of Automotive and Aerospace Structures at the University of Bolton (some local papers also refer to him as the Bolton University Professor of Crashworthiness). MMD cadres wasted no time in circling the wagons; Lusaka Province provincial minister Lameck Mangani said that Chirwa would be bruised politically if he dared to contest the MMD presidency without understanding how the party operates. While it's unclear at this point whether Chirwa has any staying power or if he intends to move to Zambia from the UK, he joins a long list of MMD contenders in advance of the tentatively-planned 2010 MMD party convention.

MARTINEZ